

# MICHIGAN LEADWORK

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006

## Third Annual Spirit of DLEG Competition

# Michigan Rehabilitation Services' Team Takes Top Honors

**C**ONGRATULATIONS TO the Michigan Rehabilitation Services' (MRS) Northern Michigan District Job Survivor Team for capturing first place in DLEG's Third Annual Spirit of DLEG Competition.

Congratulations also go to the Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration's (MIOSHA) Move Committee, the second-place winner, and the Bureau of Commercial Services, which took third place.

The theme for this year's contest was "inclusion," with a record number of entries submitted this year — 18! Here is the winning entry:

"Job Survivor is a two-day employability skills competition/workshop that was adapted by MRS's Northern Michigan District for our career tech center students. The program originally was developed by staff at Newaygo County RESA/Michigan Works! West Central as an engaging method of teaching invaluable and state-mandated skills to local career tech center students. The format follows the television show "Survivor," with both team and individual challenges.

"Day one consists of a series of five team challenges, including: Jobparty, Fashion Cops, Lei'd Off, Jig Saw Draw, and Catch That Job. Each challenge focuses on one aspect of obtaining employment. For example, Jobparty pits teams against each other in the same manner as "Jeopardy," but every category focuses on an aspect of completing an application. Interaction, extensive props, and the use of multimedia tools transform each challenge into a simulated tropical set.

"Day two opens in an auditorium setting, with the teams grouped together and faced with the task of selecting two individuals to represent them. Once selected, the individual challenges begin with the representatives introducing themselves to a panel of judges from the business community and to the audience. Judging is based on dress, appearance, communication, eye contact, and physical presentation. The contestants are narrowed to five final-



Pictured left to right are Bill Colombo, MRS; Ursula Bulthouse, Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency; Annie Campbell, Disability Network; Jessie Olson, Disability Network; Chris Wendland, Traverse Bay Area Career Tech Center (TBACTC); Melissa Gilbert, TBACTC; Elaine Carter, MRS; and Mary Kehoe, MRS.

ists, who face an on-stage interview in front of peers and judges. Based on voting by the judges, a "Sole Survivor" is declared and celebrated.

"Transition is a formal process of preparing special education students for success in life following secondary education. The Traverse Bay Area Transition Team immediately expressed an interest in adapting Job Survivor for our career tech center students. Due to the scope of the project, it was determined all students would be given the chance to participate.

(Continued on page 3)

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 2) Director's Message | 12) Disability Website |
| 5) Minimum Wage       | 16) Who Is OPLA?       |
| 10) Alcohol Awareness | 18) Pet Winners        |

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**PLEASE NOTE:** With the Oct. 31  
retirement of LEGwork Editor  
Lynne Breen (see p.7), contrib-  
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# A Message from the Director

It was certainly a treat on Thursday, Sept. 28, to witness the wonderful enthusiasm among staff at our Spirit of DLEG meeting, and especially during the announcement of the top three Spirit of DLEG winners — Michigan Rehabilitation Services' Northern District, the MIOSHA Move Committee, and the Bureau of Commercial Services (please see pages 1 and 3).

I again want to warmly congratulate the staff members on these winning teams — but I also want to emphasize that all of you who submitted entries are winners in my book. The time you spent in putting together an entry for work that you are rightly proud of means a lot, and you are all to be highly commended for your entries and the inclusiveness they represent.

I am also proud of the Wage & Hour staff and Division Director Jack Finn for your assistance in helping get the word out about the Oct. 1 increase in Michigan's minimum wage. You have answered questions from many, many citizens regarding this new legislation, which is a proud achievement in our state's history (please see page 5).

Another outstanding achievement for our state is Michigan's positioning itself to become No. 1 in the development and production of alternative fuels such as biodiesel and ethanol. I was pleased to learn that page 16 in this issue is devoted to a discussion of DLEG's Office of Policy & Legislative Affairs, which includes our Energy Office.

Our Energy Office encourages the use of new energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies, including alternative fuel vehicles and alternative fuels, and so DLEG is an integral part of Michigan's progress in this arena. In the last six months, nine ethanol or biodiesel plants have opened, broken ground, or been announced here in Michigan. In September, the first renewable energy Renaissance Zone for another new biodiesel facility was approved at the Michigan Strategic Fund Board meeting.

And recently, Ag Solutions, Michigan's first commercial biodiesel processing plant, opened in Gladstone, which will have a tremendous impact in the Upper Peninsula. The Andersons Albion Ethanol plant in Albion is now open for business, and there's a new \$100 million ethanol plant going up this fall on 25 acres in McBain, just east of Cadillac. Also, the governor has recently announced that six public service stations will receive incentives to install or convert refueling equipment to provide ethanol (E85) or biodiesel (B20) fuel. These incentives are funded through our Energy Office, using federal energy funds.

These accomplishments are important because they are bringing the day closer when all Michigan drivers will have convenient access to alternative fuels like E85 and B20. These are the advantages: (1) Michigan farmers are supplying the crops and crop residues to make biofuels; (2) Business entrepreneurs are building ethanol and biodiesel production facilities throughout the state; and (3) Michigan auto companies are manufacturing alternative fuel vehicles in record numbers. Michigan's economy, environment, and energy security are all benefiting from these efforts.

I had the pleasure of meeting so many of you at our recent Eat & Greets in Lansing, Detroit, and Grand Rapids. I know that Deputy Directors Sharon Bommarito and Rita Canady and Acting Deputy Director Doug Kalinowski also thoroughly enjoyed these informal get-togethers. We were greatly impressed with your friendliness, high level of expertise, and commitment to doing the very best you can for the people of Michigan. My thanks to Linda Cook of the Media & Public Relations office and so many others "behind the scenes" who made these events a success.

On a sad closing note, I would like to offer my heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of three staff members who passed away in recent months, Bill Gasser, Kebba Barrow, and Michael Barney. Please see page 4 for some wonderful remembrances of Bill, Kebba, and Michael.



DLEG Director Bob Swanson was warmly greeted at the Oct. 4 Eat & Greet in Grand Rapids by Nancy Ingram, Office of Trust Fund. Back in the mid-70s, Director Swanson and Nancy both worked for the former Department of Social Services.

*Robert W. Swanson*  
DIRECTOR OF DLEGWORK



# Third Annual Spirit of DLEG Competition (continued)

“An ensuing partnership emerged among Newaygo County RESA/Michigan Works! West Central, Michigan Rehabilitation Services Northern District, Northwest Michigan Works!, Traverse Bay Area Career Tech Center (TBACTC), and Northern Michigan Alliance for Independent Living. The members of this group committed to piloting Job Survivor in Traverse City for the 203 juniors remaining at TBACTC in early June. After much planning, many phone calls, several road trips, a few headaches, and a whole lot of laughs, it took shape.

“Job Survivor Traverse City was presented on June 5–6 at TBACTC and Milliken Auditorium on the campus of Northwestern Michigan College. In preparation, a pre-event curriculum called Tribal Feud News was published and circulated to students for study. Forty-nine volunteers from all of the partnering agencies supported the event. The first day was at TBACTC, which was transformed into a mass of vines, totems, artifacts, torches (no flames), plants, and even a tiki hut.

“The stage was set for day two and resembled the season finale of ‘Survivor.’ The entire set from day one was transported and reassembled. Honor State Bank donated \$400 in cash prizes for the finalist. The day went off as planned, and for those who participated, the ratings were high. In fact, Job Survivor

Traverse City II is already being re-written for an even more successful event next year.

“Job Survivor was the result of a culture that embraces collaboration and teamwork. The efforts of many were collectively required to achieve the outcome. Success was entirely dependent on the contributions made by each partner and would have failed without them.”



**Accepting the third place Spirit of DLEG award for the Bureau of Commercial Services** are Jim Nelson, Compliance, Legal and FOIA Unit; Yvette Robinson, Enforcement Division; and Deb Shiffer, Corporation Division. The bureau’s entry cited outreach with 17 different occupational boards comprised of nearly 150 individuals as among the bureau’s many programs that demonstrate the value of inclusion.



**The MIOSHA Move Committee, second-place Spirit of DLEG award winner**, involved all levels of the agency as it coordinated the temporary move of MIOSHA offices at the Secondary Complex to the Hollister Building in downtown Lansing. In the front row, l. to r., are Sue Becker, Carolene VanEpps, Leanne Haeck, Martha Yoder, and Lisa Hogan. Second row, l. to r.: John Peck, Claudia Nevins, Connie O’Neill, John Brennan, Katie Benghauser, and Amber Sweeney. Missing from the photo are Jim Gordon, Dena Hendon, Kim Hewitt, Bob Pawlowski, Maria Ley, Laurie Lorish, and Marsha Parrott-Boyle.

# Magistrates Lose Their Renaissance Man

By Norm Isotalo

It was with a great deal of sadness that the Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates reported the recent death of Magistrate Michael Barney.

Magistrate Barney was 56 at the time of his death on Sept. 10, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Shirley, two children, three grandchildren, his parents, and four sisters.

"Mike was a published poet, a writer, and a real true lover of language. He was a man of letters and the law," Workers' Compensation Agency Director Jack Nolish said. "He was a true Renaissance man."

A member of the board for the past five and a half years, he was originally appointed to the board in 2000

by then Gov. John Engler and was reappointed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm in 2004. His current term was due to expire in January 2007.

Chief Magistrate Murray Gorchow noted, "Mike was so respected by both sides in the legal community that he was frequently sought out and asked to mediate and settle disputed workers' compensation cases."

Prior to joining the board, Magistrate Barney spent 19 years as an attorney working exclusively in the field of workers' compensation. He also spent five years with the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

He earned a bachelor's degree from Wayne State University and his juris doctorate from Capital University Law School, Bexley, Ohio.



Michael Barney

# UIA Remembers a 'Kind and Well Thought of Man'

By Norm Isotalo

Kebba Barrow, a liability examiner with the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Tax Office, died Sept. 22 from complications following a kidney transplant.

Kebba joined UIA in 2002 as an unemployment claims worker at the former Detroit Westside office before moving to the Detroit RICC as a claims examiner. In June 2005, he joined the Tax Office.

He came to this country from Gambia in West Africa. He was highly educated with two master's degrees, and he spoke five languages. He was also industrious, preparing income tax returns during tax season and operating a small store selling African artifacts.

Terrie Craighead, a manager at the Detroit RICC and Kebba's first UIA supervisor, called him "a kind individual who was very well thought of by his co-workers and the people in his home village in Gambia."

"He took care of the villagers," Terrie explained, "He would send them shipments of rice and sugar and even a cow. During a recent Ramadan, he sent clothing to all of the women in the village. He was very well respected." Kebba is survived by his wife, a four-year-old daughter, his mother, and several siblings. His remains are being returned to Gambia for burial.



While working at the Detroit RICC, Kebba Barrow was photographed during a reception in his honor.

# MIOSHA's Bill Gasser Dies in Motorcycle Accident

Bill Gasser, 53, an onsite construction safety consultant with the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), died Aug. 12 from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident in Muskegon County. He is survived by his wife, Marie, and two daughters.

Bill began his career with MIOSHA in 1998 as a safety officer in the Construction Safety and Health Division, transferring in 2002 to the Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division, where he provided consultation to both

employers and employees. Prior to joining MIOSHA, Bill worked for 25 years as a union carpenter foreman for Union Local 687 in the Detroit area. He was also an Army veteran of the Vietnam War.

"Bill was very knowledgeable in the MIOSHA Construction Standards and provided an invaluable service to prevent Michigan construction workers from getting injured on the job," said Connie O'Neill, CET Division Director.



# Michigan's Minimum Wage Increased October 1

By Norm Isotalo  
Reprinted from the Michigan Employer Advisor

For the first time in nine years, Michigan's minimum wage has increased, rising to \$6.95 an hour on October 1, 2006. In March, Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed legislation approving the pay hike for the state's minimum wage earners.

The increase boosts the state's minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour, which had been in effect since 1997. The legislation also calls for further increases, raising the minimum wage to \$7.15 on July 1, 2007, and to \$7.40 on July 1, 2008.

On signing the legislation, the governor said, "Increasing the minimum wage is a critical step to ensuring that every worker receives a fair day's pay."

Michigan's minimum wage law covers employers who employ two or more persons, 16 years of age or older. In situations where an employee is subject to both the state and federal minimum wage laws, the worker is entitled to the higher of the two minimum wages. Agricultural workers continue to be covered by the state's minimum wage act.

While boosting Michigan's minimum wage, recent changes also align the state with longstanding provisions in the federal law, which exempt certain categories of workers from overtime pay. "Nothing really changes for these workers," Jack Finn, Wage & Hour Division administrator, said. "The federal exemptions had precedence in the state until our minimum wage was increased above the federal level of \$5.15 an hour."

The law change eliminated overtime exemptions for some at-home health care and day care workers.

Under state law, employers must pay overtime at the rate of one and one half times a non-exempt worker's regular hourly rate for time worked beyond 40 hours in a seven-day work week.

Recent legislation did not increase the minimum wage for "tipped" employees, such as food servers. However, employers must ensure that tipped employees earn the minimum wage of \$6.95 an hour through a combination of the minimum hourly rate of \$2.65 for tipped workers plus tips.

Another change to Michigan law creates a "sub-minimum wage" for workers under 18 years of age. The new sub-minimum allows young workers to be paid 85 percent of the state's adult minimum wage, which equals \$5.91 an hour, effective October 1, 2006; \$6.08 an hour on July 1, 2007; and \$6.29 on July 1, 2008.

For more information about the state's minimum wage, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/wagehour>, or call the Wage & Hour Division at (517) 335-0400.



Even the boss has to unpack. Wage & Hour Administrator Jack Finn finds a place for some of his manuals and directories.

## Wage & Hour Moves to New Quarters

By Norm Isotalo

In late August, the Wage & Hour Division moved from the General Office Building (GOB) in the Secondary Complex to new quarters on Mercantile Way in Lansing.

Currently, renovations are underway at the GOB, and, once they are completed, the Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission will move into the division's former space.

The new address and phone numbers are: Wage & Hour Division, 6546 Mercantile Way, Suite 5, P.O. Box 30476, Lansing, MI 48909; (517) 335-0400; (517) 335-0077 (fax).

The move does not affect the division's office in Livonia or its investigator assigned to the Upper Peninsula.



Michele Betz, an administrative assistant, unpacks files and places them in new drawers.

# Five MIOSHA Employees Receive Special Awards at Annual Meeting

By Katie Benghauser

Each fall, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) holds an annual meeting that includes the awarding of service and special employee awards.

We again congratulate the honorees from this year's meeting, which was held Sept. 28:

Paula VanderMoere won the 2006 Galeeta Galusha-Antes Excellence in Service Award, which recognizes administrative support employees who have contributed to the agency's primary objective of protecting Michigan workers through ongoing exceptional performance, efficiency, accuracy, and providing day-to-day stability to their work unit through responsive and consistent actions. Paula's colleagues who nominated her described her: "Although Paula never promotes herself or boasts of her accomplishments, she does her job so effectively and efficiently that we hardly notice she is there."

John Fahrne won the 2006 William H. Sebring Meritorious Service Award, which recognizes a non-supervisory, non-administrative support employee in the General Industry Safety & Health Division or the Construction Safety & Health Division who has made a significant contribution in furthering the agency's primary objective of protecting Michigan workers, encouraging innovation in meeting agency goals, and fostering the spirit of teamwork. Colleagues who nominated John said: "If Michigan workers knew about John's tenacity for safety, they would sleep well at night."

Bob Dayringer won the 2006 Allan W. Harvie Meritorious Service Award, which recognizes a non-supervisory, non-administrative support employee in the Consultation Education and Training Division, Appeals Division, Management and Technical Services Division, or Administration Division who has made an ongoing significant contribution in furthering the agency's primary objective of protecting Michigan workers, encouraging innovation in meeting agency goals, and fostering the spirit of teamwork. Colleagues who nominated Bob said: "Bob is a wealth of

industrial hygiene information and he happily shares it with employers and colleagues daily"

John Byrne won the 2006 Bernard D. Bloomfield Award, which recognizes a non-supervisory industrial hygienist in the MIOSHA enforcement program who has made a significant contribution in helping to further the agency's primary objective to improve workplace conditions and prevent occupational illness. Colleagues who nominated John said: "I wish we had ten more of him!"

Ron Ray won the 2006 Herbert C. Austin Director's Discretionary Award, which recognizes a supervisory or management staff member whose performance has been exemplary and who has made an outstanding and exceptional contribution to the agency during the past year and significantly impacted the ability of the agency to meet its goals of protecting the safety and health of Michigan's working men and women. Colleagues nominate this person, and then a committee comprised of the previous year's special employee award recipients narrows the selection to two individuals. Their recommendations are presented to the agency director, who makes the final award decision. Colleagues who nominated Ron said: "Ron has done an incredible job of identifying issues in the laboratory and instituting changes that have had very positive outcomes for the entire agency."



MIOSHA's special employee award winners are (l. to r.) Paula VanderMoere, John Fahrne, Ron Ray, John Byrne, and Bob Dayringer.



# People on the Move



Tom Sanfilippo

Best wishes to **Richard Grafmiller**, senior safety officer with the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), who retired from state service in August. Richard worked for the Construction Safety and Health Division for 14 years and was considered a highly knowledgeable and competent safety officer. He had worked in the building trades as a sheet metal tradesman for more than 20 years prior to his joining the MIOSHA team. He began working in MIOSHA's Construction Safety Division in 1992 as a construction safety inspector and in 2003 was promoted to a senior level safety officer. "Richard will be greatly missed not only for the good work he did, but also because of his personality" said **Bob Pawlowski**, director, Construction Safety & Health.

Congratulations to **George Matish**, State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules, who retired Aug. 31. George oversaw administrative law judges at Cadillac Place, Detroit, involved with unemployment insurance, employment relations, and other programs. George had been with the state of Michigan since 1986, when he was appointed by Gov. James Blanchard to direct the Office of the State Employer. He later left that post to join the Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC), a predecessor to the Unemployment Insurance Agency. At MESC he became the chief referee and directed the division's administrative law judges as they heard UI benefit and tax case appeals. Before joining state government, George was a senior partner in a law firm, corporate counsel for the City of Detroit during the Coleman Young administration, and chief counsel for the Legal Aid and Defenders Council in Detroit.

**Lynne Breen**, communications specialist, Office of Media & Public Relations, is retiring Oct. 31 after 30 years of state service. Lynne joined the Department of Education in 1976 and has served in various departments, including many years as public information manager for Michigan Rehabilitation Services. For her work, she has received two first-place awards from the Public Relations Society of America/Central Michigan Chapter and a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Michigan School Public Relations Association. Prior to joining state service, Lynne was a teacher in Garden City, a social worker in Maryland, a community college English instructor and textbook editor in Ohio, and a public relations writer for the University of Connecticut. A graduate of Eastern Michigan University, Lynne has a master's degree in guidance & counseling from EMU and a master's degree in journalism from Michigan State University.

Congratulations to **Jennifer Fields**, who has been promoted

from a regulation agent to a regulation manager and will now supervise staff at the Wage & Hour Division's Livonia office. A 12-year veteran with the division, Jennifer will supervise a staff of six Wage & Hour investigators. The investigators enforce the state's four major labor standards laws — Minimum Wage & Overtime Law, Payment of Wages Act, Prevailing Wage Act, and Youth Employment Standards Act. Prior to joining the Wage & Hour Division, Jennifer worked at her family's business — a party store in Howell that made its own candy and ice cream. After the business was sold, Jennifer worked for the U.S. Postal Service as a part-time rural carrier. Jennifer is a graduate of Cleary University in Howell, with a bachelor's degree in business administration/management.

"This is a good unit with good people," **Tom Sanfilippo** said following his recent promotion to manager of the Benefits Payment Control Unit with the Unemployment Insurance Agency. And Tom should know about the people who work in the unit, because he has been a member of the unit for several years. In 1990, Tom joined the former Central Fraud Control and Collection Division. Over the years, the division went through several changes, but Tom continued his work as an analyst in the area that eventually became the Benefit Payment Control Unit. In late July, he became the unit's manager. The unit with its staff of 10 works to reduce unemployment benefit fraud by working with several cross match programs — intra and interstate cross match, Social Security number cross match, and the State Directory of New Hires cross match. Tom has a bachelor of business management degree from Eastern Michigan University.

Congratulations to **Jennifer Pickard** and **Amy Vallier**, Builders/Design Boards Unit, Bureau of Commercial Services, who have been promoted to departmental technician positions in support of the unit, and to **Linda Pung**, Builders/Design Boards Unit, who has been promoted to a departmental technician 10 position. Linda performs corporation, limited liability contractors, and partnership application processes.



Linda Pung



Jennifer Fields



Jennifer Pickard and Amy Vallier

# People on the Move (continued)

Congratulations to Safety Officer **Bryan Renaud** on his recent promotion to senior safety officer in MIOSHA's Construction Safety & Health Division. Bryan has been a construction safety officer since 2003. He has conducted several complex investigations and willingly volunteers on several agency and divisional committees.

Congratulations to MIOSHA's **Patty Meyer**, who has been appointed construction safety manager in the Construction Safety & Health Division. Patty has more than 16 years of experience with the MIOSHA program, including 10 years as a construction safety compliance inspector, two years as an on-site consultant, three years as a first-line compliance construction safety supervisor, and one-and-a-half years as a 14-level Safety Section supervisor. Patty completed an electrical apprenticeship through the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 58 and worked as an electrician for 11 years. She also has completed two years of college.

Congratulations to **Holly Caksackkar**, secretary in the Corporation Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, who has been promoted to secretary, Accountancy/Cemetery Unit, Licensing Division.

Best wishes to **Melody Lindsey**, director of the Michigan Commission for the Blind Training School in Kalamazoo for the past seven-and-a-half years, who has accepted the post of director of the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired. Melody had worked for state blind rehabilitation agencies and training centers in Florida, Louisiana, Alaska, and New Mexico prior to coming to Michigan.

Best wishes to **Dulcey Simpkins**, Ph.D., who coordinated the Biomass Program in the Energy Office for the past two years, on her new position as director of Entrepreneurship and Commercialization at Saginaw Valley State University. Dulcey's new job focuses on fostering "new economy" enterprises in alternative energy, advanced manufacturing, green business and services, and clean technology.

Best wishes to **Anne Harris**, an unemployment insurance examiner with the Grand Rapids Remote Initial Claims Center, Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), who has left state service to pursue a master's degree in research methods in psychology at the University of Liverpool. Anne was with UIA for two years.

Welcome to **Christine Boone**, who has been selected as the new director of the Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center in Kalamazoo. Chris has spent most of the past 25 years working in the field of vocational rehabilitation, serving as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, rehabilitation teacher, and rehabilitation center instructor teaching home man-

agement and cane travel. She has also worked as a program administrator, transition services coordinator, and older blind specialist. She attended law school in the 1990s, where she served as president of the International Moot Court Board and held an internship with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Omaha. After receiving her juris doctorate and becoming a member of the Nebraska Bar in 1996, she worked as a labor and employment lawyer in the hospitality industry. She later returned to government work as legal counsel for the general rehabilitation agency in Pennsylvania. From 2000 until 2003, she was director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services and, most recently, served as corporate counsel for Blind Industries & Services of Maryland.

Welcome to **Erma Leaphart-Gouch**, who has been named to head the Unemployment Insurance Agency's (UIA) staff training programs. A state employee for more than 20 years, Erma joined UIA in early September to direct the Center for Learning & Development, based at Cadillac Place, Detroit. She comes to the agency with six years of experience as the training director at Huron Valley Center, which provides mental health services to convicted felons under a contract with the Department of Corrections. During the past two years, Erma served as a public health consultant with the Department of Community Health, Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Control. Erma began her state career in the Department of Social Services, now Human Services, where she worked as a departmental analyst, departmental specialist, and human resources manager. A graduate of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Erma has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Missouri.

The Unemployment Insurance Agency unit that oversees two of UIA's most important priorities — the SUTA Dumping and 1099 initiatives — now has a manager. **Mary Brennan**, a former magistrate with the Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates, has been named to manage the SUTA Dumping/Independent Contractor Unit. Based at Cadillac Place, Detroit, the unit is responsible for combating SUTA dumping and checking that employers do not misclassify employees as independent contractors. Both initiatives are intended to ensure that employers pay their fair share of state unemployment taxes. An attorney with over 12 years' experience as a workers' compensation magistrate, Mary has also worked as a clerk for the state Court of Appeals and served as a staff attorney with the Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission. She has also been in private practice, working mainly on workers' compensation cases. Mary earned her law degree from Wayne State University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan. She is a member of the State Bar of Michigan.

The Southwest District of Michigan Rehabilitation Services is happy to welcome **Debbie Shortt** as a



Christine Boone



Erma Leaphart-Gouch



Mary Brennan



## People on the Move (continued)



Felicia Badger

new counselor at the Battle Creek office. Debbie comes from a center for independent living partner agency, Disability Resource Center in Kalamazoo, where she was employed for 11 years. During that time she completed her bachelor's and master's degrees at Western Michigan University. Debbie has expertise in assistive technology and has experience working with teens, felons, and substance abusers.

The Bureau of Commercial Services has welcomed **Felicia Badger** as a new departmental analyst in its Licensing Division, where she will work with the Real Estate Appraiser Licensing Program in the Cosmetology/Barber/Appraiser Unit. Previously, Felicia was office supervisor at the Department of Natural Resources and an unemployment insurance examiner with the Unemployment Insurance Agency in DLEG. Felicia holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Northwood University and is currently pursuing a master's degree in human resource management from Central Michigan University.

MIOSHA's Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division is pleased to announce the appointment of



Jason Koontz, Angela Cosgrove, and Randall Harrison

**Deborah Gorkisch** as a 23 (g) safety consultant serving the Western Michigan region. Deborah has over eight years' experience as an occupational health and safety professional with Johnson Technology for two plants located in Muskegon. Deborah was instrumental in helping this company achieve its MVPP (Michigan Voluntary Protection Program) status. Previously, she worked for two years as a safety

technician at another West Michigan firm. Deborah has a B.S. degree in occupational safety and health management from Grand Valley State University.

MIOSHA's CET Division is also pleased to announce the selection of two new industrial hygienists, **Kristin Osterkamp** and **Gregg Grubb**. Both have previous experience as MIOASHA employees. Kristin was hired as a 23 (g) industrial hygiene consultant who will work out of the Farmington District Office. She has more than 11 years of experience as an occupational health and safety professional with Michigan Consolidated Gas Company, Delphi, and MIOASHA Enforcement. Kristin has a B.S. degree in chemistry from Elmhurst College in Illinois and

received her Master of Science degree from the University of Michigan School of Public Health. She will be part of the Southeast Michigan region. Gregg was hired as a 23 (g) industrial hygiene consultant who will be part of the Mid-Michigan region and work out of the Lansing office. Gregg has over 19 years of experience as an occupational health and safety professional with MIOASHA, six of those years working at the Michigan State Police Forensic Lab. Gregg started his MIOASHA career in 1987 in the Occupational Health Division as an education and training consultant until 2000. Gregg has a B.S. degree in chemical engineering from Michigan State University and expects to obtain his Master of Public Health degree in industrial hygiene from the University of Michigan in 2006.

MIOSHA's Construction Safety & Health Division is pleased to announce that two new construction safety officers are on board. **Jeremy Hidalgo** has accepted a construction safety officer position in Area 12. He is a journeyman electrician with approximately nine years in the construction field. He has an associate's degree in general studies and is working towards a bachelor's degree in construction management. **Phu Nguyen** has accepted a construction safety officer position in Area 17. He is a journeyman carpenter with approximately nine years in the construction industry. Phu has a Bachelor of Science degree in construction management from Michigan State University.

MIOSHA is also pleased to welcome **JoAnn Snider**, who has accepted a communications assistant position in the Standards Section. JoAnn will be the master distributor of standards.

The Wage & Hour Division recently welcomed aboard three new investigators — **Angela Cosgrove**, **Randall Harrison**, and **Jason Koontz**. Angela and Jason will be based in the division's Lansing office, while Randall will work out of the Livonia office. They will investigate complaints filed under the four public acts the division enforces — Minimum Wage & Overtime Law, Payment of Wages Act, Prevailing Wage Act, and Youth Employment Standards Act. Angela joins the Division from Cooley Law School, where she worked as a human resource (HR) generalist. Randall had worked in marketing for the MGM Grand Casino in Detroit, while Jason had been working at Suburban Ice in Lansing. All three are fairly recent college graduates. Angela graduated from Western Michigan University with a degree in HR management. Randall and Jason both earned degrees in criminal justice. Randall earned his degree from Alabama State University, and Jason received his from Michigan State University.

# MIOSHA Complimented During Federal Financial Monitoring Visit

By Martha Yoder

Kudos to MIOSHA's Management Information Systems Section, Laboratory & Equipment Services Section (LESS), and Patti Brace for their work recently with three federal auditors.

Federal OSHA had been onsite to perform a financial monitoring visit. The visit meant many requests for detailed information on personnel transactions, equipment inventory, purchasing, and other program activities. LESS staff, Ron Ray, and Patti Brace were very efficient in providing all of the information and documentation needed by the auditors.

Tim Martin, Finance and Administrative Services, provided excellent coordination and leadership for the audit, and our thanks and appreciation go to him.

John Newquist, assistant regional director, OSHA Region V, praised the level of organization and cooperation that was received during the audit. In a closing conference with the auditors, Ron Ray was advised that the report will not contain any deficiencies, only some recommendations for consideration.

Our thanks to all who assisted with the audit and all MIOSHA staff for the good work throughout the agency to properly prepare and maintain documentation.

## Liquor Control Commissioners Help Launch New Public Awareness Campaign

By Angela Simpson

On Aug. 28, Michigan Liquor Control Commissioner Judy Allen teamed up with Congressman Vernon Ehlers; Jennifer Curley of The Century Council; Rishi Makkar, owner and operator of International Beverage; and Lieutenant Ralph Mason from the Grand Rapids Police Department to launch a public awareness campaign designed to prevent underage drinking and discourage adults from providing alcohol to minors.

The "65% Awareness Campaign" launch was held at International Beverage on East Paris SE in Grand Rapids, hosted by dedicated licensee Rishi Makkar. The 65 percent number stems from a Century Council (<http://www.centurycouncil.org>) survey that found 65 percent of the young people who reported drinking said they got the alcohol from family and friends.

In an effort to reduce this number, The Century Council is offering these tips:

- 1) Talk to your child/kids about alcohol dangers
- 2) Be a good adult role model
- 3) Disapprove of underage drinking
- 4) Reinforce that underage drinking is against the law
- 5) Supervise your child, including their online activities.

Supervisory attention was also the focus of another Michigan Liquor Control Commissioner's presentation to the Ottawa County Health Department based on a survey conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (NCASA) at Columbia University.

Commissioner Jim Storey presented the NCASA data, citing 80 percent of parents believe that neither alcohol nor marijuana is available at teen parties, while 50 percent of teens reported that alcohol, drugs, or both ARE available at teen parties. According to the study, 98 percent of parents reported being present at teen parties at their home, while 33 percent of teens said that parents are rarely or never seen at parties.

Commissioner Storey said that he uses quantitative survey data of this kind to emphasize to parents and other adults the importance of communicating with our youth and to promote general awareness of the situations and environments young people face where alcohol might be present — including the home.

Earlier this month, Commissioner Storey joined Century Council representative Jennifer Curley for the 65% Awareness Campaign along with race car driver Michael Andretti at Showerman's Fine Wines and Liquor in Livonia.



Present at the launching of the 65% Awareness Campaign were Lt. Mason, Rishi Makkar, Jennifer Curley, Congressman Ehlers, and Judy Allen.



# Three DLEG Rehabilitation Professionals Honored at Small Business Awards Program



Deborah Wilson



Liina Paasuke

A rehabilitation counselor with the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) and two representatives of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) were honored Aug. 10 at the Fifth Annual Small Business Recognition Awards Banquet, held at the Lansing Community College M-TEC.

The awards program is sponsored each year by MCB, MRS, and the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns to celebrate the achievements of small business owners with disabilities and the services provided by human service professionals who support their endeavors.

Deborah Wilson, an MCB counselor who works in Flint, was presented with the MCB Employee Award for her accomplishments in assisting a high number of MCB clients into successful businesses of their own.

In her 12 years with MCB, Debbie has had 17 successful small business/self-employment

closures, with two more in the works this year.

Liina Paasuke, a rehabilitation counselor with MRS-Ann Arbor, was presented with the MRS Champion of the Year Award for her excellent grasp of small business concepts and assisting other MRS counselors in effectively selecting and using small business resources.

Liina participates in a team that reviews all small business cases in the five-county Ann Arbor District.



James Garrison

James Garrison, business services representative, MRS Mid Michigan District, received the MRS Small Business Service Award. Jim has provided outstanding business services for more than eight years.

He also created the ADA Information Wizard and the Transition Explorer, two Web-based programs that have become standard tools for MRS counselors statewide.

## Job Shadow Experience at DLEG Enhances Young Man's Leadership Skills



Kraig Hug (center) poses with DODHH Director Christopher Hunter (left) and Duncan Wyeth, director of the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns.

One of the values of the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC) is mentoring youth with disabilities to assist them in becoming leaders in their communities and at the state and national levels.

This past summer, the Commission's Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DODHH) provided a valuable job shadow experience for Kraig Hug, a senior at St. Louis (Mich.) High School, a young man interested in public service and who already has exhibited leader-

ship qualities in his own hometown.

After spending three days with Kraig, DODHH Director Christopher Hunter said, "He is a potential leader in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community! He is a bright young man who is punctual to the job. He asked many excellent questions. He visited the State Capitol and went to his district legislator's office to give information on the interpreter bill [HB 6087]. I would hire him if there is a job opening in my office in the future."

While at DODHH, Kraig also made telephone calls using the video relay service, typed a document to be printed in Braille, and learned technology used by persons with hearing loss.

Kraig is head of the Deaf Teen Club for the Gratiot-Isabella Regional Educational Service Area and president of the youth leadership group at his church, among many other activities. He is also the recipient of an award from the Optimist Club of Gratiot County, recognizing him for overcoming adversity.

# 'Change a Light' to Save Dollars and the Environment

By Judy Palnau

Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) Commissioner Monica Martinez is encouraging Michigan electric customers to reduce their electric bills by switching to energy efficient lighting products that can result in big savings.

Commissioner Martinez made the announcement at a press conference Oct. 4 in Marquette as part of the national "Change a Light, Change the World" education campaign sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

"If every household in Michigan switches only one light bulb to an energy efficient model, Michigan would save more than \$25 million in energy costs annually," she said. "Not only is it good for the pocketbook, but it's good for the environment. Changing a single light bulb can prevent 500 pounds of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere over the bulb's lifetime. That is equivalent to about 350 pounds of coal being burned."

Replacing 25 percent of the light bulbs in high-use areas of your home with compact fluorescent bulbs can result in reduced energy used for lighting by 50 percent or more.

## Website of Interest to People with Disabilities Is Launched

DLEG Director Robert W. Swanson and Teri Takai, director of the Department of Information Technology, announced Sept. 18 that the State of Michigan has launched a website devoted solely to the interests and concerns of people with disabilities.

Developed by the two departments, the site contains information about accessible housing, employment assistance, assistive technology, and accessible transportation, among many other topic areas.

DLEG initiated the website to encourage easier access to the department's Commission on Disability Concerns, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and Michigan Commission for the Blind. The development team incorporated many other state and federal

resources available to people with disabilities on the new website.

"We anticipate the website will be very useful not only for individuals with disabilities, but also for family members and those in the medical, vocational rehabilitation, education, social work, and other human service professions," Director Swanson said. "The site provides direct links to specific programs as well as to state and federal laws that benefit people with disabilities."

The website address is <http://www.michigan.gov/disabilityresources>. Persons with suggestions for making the site more helpful and user friendly are encouraged to contact the site manager at [disabilityresources@michigan.gov](mailto:disabilityresources@michigan.gov).

## Northern Michigan MRS Team Is Honored

Elaine Carter, manager of Michigan Rehabilitation Services' (MRS) Northern Michigan District, recently accepted a "Making a Difference Community Partner" award on behalf of the staff of the Northern Michigan district. Jim Gills with Goodwill Industries of Northern Michigan made the award presentation. Northern Michigan MRS staff members were recognized by Goodwill for being "a dedicated team, helping to make the vision of independence become a reality."





## Special Deliveries

### Graphic Designer Jim Kremer Noted for Having a Big Heart

Congratulations to Jim Kremer, graphic designer, Office of Media & Public Relations, who has been presented with a Special Delivery from the Director.



Special Delivery recipient Jim Kremer is congratulated by Jeannie Vogel, marketing manager, Office of Media & Public Relations.

Jim was nominated by Dennis Hart, director of the Michigan Career & Technical Institute, who wrote: "Jim Kremer does more than create professional and attractive brochures, posters, and exhibits for DLEG. He also has a big heart. He was recently asked to create a full-page conference program ad for Michigan Rehabilitation Services. Because he wanted the ad to be authentic, he contacted MCTI to see if some of our students could appear in a photo for the ad. Adam Reynolds, one of our printing instructors, made arrangements with some students and took the photos, which Jim incorporated into the ad. To thank the students, Jim, on his own, created a portfolio for each student, consisting of the completed ad as well as the 'outtake' photos. This thoughtful gesture was very much appreciated by the students, who said they were very happy to see the finished product."

### Unemployment Insurance Examiners Gene LaNore and Beth Courtney Praised

Congratulations to Gene LaNore and Beth Courtney, unemployment insurance examiners at the Grand Rapids Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC), Unemployment Insurance Agency, who were recently presented with Special Deliveries from the Director.



The Grand Rapids RICC displayed its creativity by basing Gene's and Beth's Special Deliveries on a Publisher's Clearinghouse presentation. From left to right are Marianne Holst, Gene LaNore, Beth Courtney, and Laurie Patrick.

Marianne Holst, manager of the Grand Rapids RICC, nominated Gene LaNore. Marianne wrote: "Gene was first featured in our UIA newsletter, The Buzzzzz, for his exceptional contribution to the RIC center because he was able to process MARVINS (this is the mechanism that our claimants use to report their legal responsibility to the agency so that the claimant can get paid their unemployment as long as they meet eligibility requirements.) While most staff were able to process 80 or so, Gene could more than double that. Gene took this process a step further. By reviewing and analyzing data, he determined that of the MARVIN work that was distributed to all staff in the Remote Initial Claim Centers, only about 11 to 17 percent actually required a staff person's intervention. With further work, the entire MARVIN process was changed, which resulted in a Field Release to all Agency staff. The bottom line is that Gene's innovations, hard work, and dedication have saved staff processing MARVINS a lot of work, freeing them up to process other very important work."

Beth Courtney was nominated by Laurie Patrick, manager at the Grand Rapids RICC, who wrote: "Beth has set up an Excel program that has taken our production report and calculated it to give us totals for individual staff on a daily and weekly basis, individual teams on a daily and weekly basis, and totals for our RICC on a daily and weekly basis. She has also set up a program to capture the designated writer and non-designated

writer's counts for the week. These programs have freed up our managers as well as our analyst's time each week that was spent adding and balancing production counts. In addition, Beth has created the same production reports for the Work Distribution Center with their own criteria added. Beth has an IT background and has been with the Unemployment Agency for three years."

# Special Deliveries

## Felicia Quinn Is Always Pleasant and Understanding

Congratulations to Felicia Quinn, an analyst in the Occupational Research Section, Labor Exchange Services Division, who has received a Special Delivery from the Director.

Felicia was nominated by co-worker Loretta Crow, who wrote, "Please see the attached letter of appreciation sent to Kenneth Parker, manager, Occupational Research Section, from an attorney in Columbus, Ohio. The attorney wrote: 'I would like to bring to your attention the excellent assistance provided to our office by Ms. Felicia Quinn. I have worked with her over the past eight months on complex prevailing wage issues and her efforts have been exemplary. Ms. Quinn has always been helpful, patient and professional. She also has promptly replied to my messages or emails and, despite the grief I've no doubt caused her, is always pleasant and understanding. I've worked with many different state employment agencies throughout the United States, but I've seldom encountered a person as helpful as Ms. Quinn. She is a credit to the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth, and you are fortunate to have her as a member of your team. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.'"



Felicia Quinn, right, was nominated for her Special Delivery by Loretta Crow, director's secretary, Labor Exchange Services Division.

### "Special Delivery from the Director"

I would like to nominate the following staff member to receive a "Great Job" acknowledgement from the Director:

Name of Nominee:	Submitted By:
Office/Bureau of Nominee	Job Title of Nominee
Telephone # of Nominator	Office Location of Nominee

The reason I am nominating this person:

Office/Bureau Director:	Date:

**Bureau Directors: Forward to Linda Cook—DLEG Media Office, 4th Floor, Ottawa Building, Lansing**  
E-mail: [CookL1@Michigan.gov](mailto:CookL1@Michigan.gov) --OR-- FAX: 517-241-1580; Phone: 517-241-0199



# Saginaw UIA Manager Is Mom to a Princess

By Kiyomi Bennett

As a mother, Patryce Collins, a manager at the Unemployment Insurance Agency's (UIA) Remote Initial Claims Center in Saginaw, knew her daughter Marjani was a talented and attractive young woman.

Therefore, she wasn't surprised when Marjani was named Michigan's Miss Teen Princess 2006. The pageant was held in April on the campus of Wayne State University in Detroit and was sponsored by Talented Youth Development Incorporated (TYDI). It attracted contestants from around the state, who displayed their talents as dancers, vocalists, poets, and musicians.

This was the first pageant that Marjani, a 16-year-old singer/pianist, had ever entered, and she blew the judges away with her person-

al interview, which earned her the Interview Award. She also walked off with the Miss Congeniality prize.

Marjani is a sophomore at Heritage High School in Saginaw, where she carries a 3.5 GPA and is a member of the school's dance team. Outside of school, she attends the Resurrection Life Ministries Church and is active in the youth department.

After high school, she plans on attending college to become a pediatrician, although she is entertaining the idea of becoming a professional singer. Her interests include writing songs and poetry, playing the keyboard, and singing.

As Miss Teen Michigan, Marjani received a \$500 scholarship, a state crown, banner, and trophy. She also represented Michigan during TYDI's Miss American Scholarship Pageant, which was held Oct. 14 in New Jersey.



Marjani Abdur-Rahman Collins

## Got Talent? Diane Donaldson's Son Does

By Crystal Galloway

The Unemployment Insurance Agency had a connection with this summer's hot new television show "America's Got Talent."

Clarence Donaldson, son of Diane Donaldson, an unemployment claims examiner at the Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center, was one of the many who tried and one of the few who made it onto the new NBC show.

"Talent" is a spin-off of the very popular "American Idol" program and is produced by Idol's Simon Cowell. Unlike "Idol," which is for singers, "Talent" features all types of entertainers who are vying for a \$1 million prize.

Clarence sang "Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing" by Stevie Wonder in round one of the competition and made it through to the show's second round, where he sang "Can We Talk?" by Tevin Campbell.

Clarence is a 17-year-old honor student at the Saginaw Arts and Science Academy, where he is a senior. In April, he auditioned for the show in Chicago, and by late May learned he had been selected from thousands of aspiring performers. He then flew to Los Angeles to tape his round one performance, which aired on June 28.

Has Clarence been bitten by the show biz bug? Will he pursue a singing career? Well, right now,

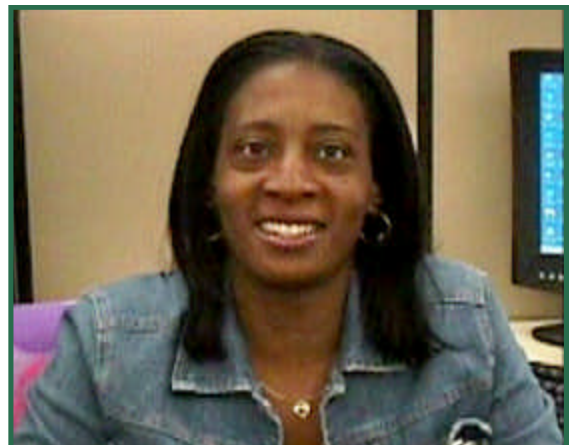
he is considering something in the medical field, his mother reports.

"Although Clarence loves to sing, he hasn't made any decisions to pursue a career in the music industry," Diane recently wrote. "His current aspiration is to become an anesthesiologist. Although he hasn't decided on a college to attend, he is looking at the University of Michigan, the University of Southern California, and Howard University."

If Clarence follows through on his career plans, perhaps he can use his singing to calm nervous patients.



Clarence Donaldson was seen on the national TV show "America's Got Talent."



Diane Donaldson is proud of her son's singing ability, but thinks he will pursue a career in medicine.

# Who Is 'OPLA' and What Does It Do?

By Jeannine Benedict

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth's (DLEG) Office of Policy & Legislative Affairs (OPLA) and Energy Office occupy several areas of the fourth floor of the Ottawa Building in Lansing. This small but far-reaching office includes the department's legislative liaison staff, Boundary Commission staff, Regulatory Affairs officer, and the Energy Office staff.

Tom Martin, director of the office, is known to most agencies within DLEG as the calm, reasoned voice of the department at Capitol legislative committee meetings. He heads a staff of dedicated employees who respond to legislative and constituent calls in coordination with other DLEG agencies.

OPLA staff includes Pam Beach and Robin Norton (legislative affairs); Jeannine Benedict (administrative rules); Christine Holmes and Nikki Sunstrum (Boundary Commission); and Maurine Mitchell (Tom Martin's secretary). The DLEG website includes bill analyses from OPLA that relate to DLEG issues at [www.michigan.gov/dleg](http://www.michigan.gov/dleg), and linking to "Inside DLEG" and "Legislative Info."

This office assists: 1) other DLEG agencies with rule-making efforts; 2) administering statutes related to municipal incorporations, consolidations, and certain types of annexations through Boundary Commission staff; 3) processing land sales registrations; and 4) handling a variety of other issues that may arise from legislators, industry groups, state and local officials, and attorneys, as well as the general public.

Tom's Energy Office managers, Jan Patrick and John Sarver, head the Conservation Programs and Technical Assistance Sections, respectively, and Alice Wood serves as the Energy Office secretary and backup to Maurine Mitchell. Staff members who

work with Conservation Programs include Tom Krupiarz, Tim Shireman, Brandy Minikey, the newest full-time staff member, Shauna Tonsor, and student assistants Trista Gregorski and Chelsea Pearson. Technical Assistance staff includes

Patrick Hudson, Roger Doherty, and student assistant Nick Helmholtz. Pat is responsible for residential programs, and Roger is responsible for commercial building and industrial programs. Section staff also promote solar and wind energy.

Program activities are designed to encourage the use of new technologies and alternative fuels in buildings, industrial processes, vehicles, and in power generation. Program objectives are advanced through a variety of services, including information dissemination, technical assistance, financial assistance, and demonstration projects. The primary funding source for the Energy Office is the U.S. Department of Energy. Visit the website at [www.michigan.gov/energyoffice](http://www.michigan.gov/energyoffice) to discover a variety of information about energy.

The Energy Office works directly with many agencies within DLEG, including the Public Service Commission, and interacts with the legislature, the governor's office, other state departments including the Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Quality, Management and Budget, and Education, as well as with various interest groups and local communities in cooperation on a number of energy-related issues.

Recent issues in the news affecting the day-to-day operations of OPLA/EO include the Governor's 21st Century Energy Plan, alternative fuel promotion within the state, the minimum wage increase announcement, legislative efforts to eliminate bad builders, and real estate broker minimum services. The office also works on many other initiatives to promote economic development within the state.

Thanks to staff who contributed to this article.  
J.B.



Seated, l. to r., Jeannine Benedict, Pam Beach, Mo Mitchell, Brandy Minikey, and Alice Wood. Standing, l. to r., Trista Gregorski, Nikki Sunstrum, Christine Holmes, Shauna Tonsor, Robin Norton, Jan Patrick, Tom Krupiarz, Tom Martin, Pat Hudson, Tim Shireman, Roger Doherty, Nick Helmholtz, and John Sarver.



# Judy Marches to the Beat of a Pipe Band

By Norm Isotalo



Clad in the Windsor Police Pipe Band's Red Gordon tartan, Judy Salajan holds her tenor drum and a certificate of achievement for playing with the award-winning band.

If you work on the 12th floor at Cadillac Place in Detroit, you might occasionally hear the rat-a-tat-tat of a drum beat as Judy Salajan practices for her role as a tenor drummer with the Windsor Police Pipe Band.

The band, of which Judy has been a member for the past six years, just came away with its fourth competition championship of the year. The 35-member group, which is composed of drummers and bagpipers, was named U.S. Pipe Band Champs (Alma, MI), Canadian Pipe Band Champs (Hamilton, Ont.), North American Pipe Band Champs (Maxville, Ont.), and Champion Supreme (Fergus, Ont.).

"This is the first time in 57 years that one pipe band has won all four championships in a single year," Judy, an analyst with the Unemployment Insurance Agency, proudly pointed out.

Despite playing for this award-winning band, Judy is a relative novice to playing the tenor drum. When she first joined the group, she did not know how to play the drum. In fact, she had no musical background.

"I always wanted to play a musical instrument, but with a family of four kids, it was hard to find the time. So, when they grew up, they told me it was time to get a life," Judy said.

She and a girlfriend heard about the Windsor pipe band and decided to join. Initially, Judy became a flag carrier, and then she learned how to

do flourishing. In flourishing, one doesn't actually beat the drum; instead, the player uses hand movements to visually represent the music. Judy became so good at it she was judged a champion supreme at solo flourishing.

Her next step was to learn how to play the tenor drum, which meant she had to learn how to read music and beat the drum while keeping her rhythm, her timing, and her tempo while at the same time learning to march.

"It requires a lot of practice," Judy says. "I will practice in the morning before work, at home after work, and at night before going to bed. I also practice with the band for three to four hours a week."

You can also find Judy at work marching or practicing her drumming in an empty conference or file room during breaks and lunch.

The band plays throughout the year, and Judy rarely misses a practice or event. "I enjoy the music and the people," she said. "The music is something I always wanted to do and it's intriguing."

With the agency, Judy works on the SAVE (System Alien Verification Entitlement) program. She verifies the work authorizations of alien workers for the time periods they are using to file for unemployment benefits. She electronically checks the authorizations with the Department of Homeland Security and handles, on average, 1,000 authorizations a month.

Clearly, Judy has learned to march to the beat of her own drum.

## MCTI Cabinetmaking Department Brings Tom Pinske to Michigan



More than 30 employers attended a Sept. 27 seminar at the Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) featuring Tom Pinske (pictured, right), renowned solid surface fabricator (The Pinske Edge) of Plato, Minnesota. The seminar was sponsored by the MCTI Cabinetmaking/Millwork Department. Department Head Jim Wellever said the event "provided a great opportunity for our students and also good exposure to the employers." Student Kenny Johnson (pictured, left) was very happy to win a door prize. Assisting with the seminar were the MCTI Culinary Arts Department, Retail Marketing Department, Jen LaSalla and the kitchen staff, Mile Rodarte, Kathy Fretz, John Hausig, and Paul Mulka.

# Pet Competition Is a Huge Hit!

**WE ALL LOVE OUR PETS**, whether it's Fluffy the cat or Fido the dog, and DLEG employees certainly showed their devotion by entering 141 pets in our department's recent Pet Competition.

Voting took place in both Detroit and Lansing during the noontime Eat & Greets with Director Robert Swanson and Deputy Directors Rita Canady and Sharon Bommarito and Acting Deputy Director Doug Kalinowski.

A big thank you goes to Linda Cook, Media & Public Relations, for initiating the idea of the contest and coordinating all of the details necessary to make this event the huge success it was, and to Graphic Designer Jim Kremer for his enormous assistance in handling the graphics work needed for the contest.

Photos of the pets are available for viewing on the DLEG intranet. Here is a listing of the winners:

## Detroit

### Most Adorable

Allison Cosgrove—Vialelei (Cat)  
Runner up: Lynne Breen—Fred (Dog)

### Most Creative

Allison Cosgrove—Ohana (Dog)  
Runner up: Marcia Miller—Piper (Dog)

### Most Unusual

Donna O'Brien—Merryweather, Flora, Fawna (Frogs)  
Runner up: Cindy Curtis—Peanut (Squirrel)

### Cutest

Linda Karos—Oso & Cri Cri (Dogs)  
Runner up: Roseann Malama Smith—Snickers (Dog)

### Ugliest

Donna O'Brien—Merryweather, Flora, Fawna (Frogs)  
Runner up: Robin Bartley—Zorro (Cat)

### Prettiest

Carlos Jaramillo—Ziggy (Dog)  
Runner up: Courtney Ford—Sophie (Dog)

### Funniest

Sherri Davio—Jazzie (Dog)  
Runner up: Robin Bartley—Zorro (Cat)

## Lansing

### Most Adorable

Marcia Miller—Piper (Dog)  
Runner up: JoAnn Hubbard—Tippy (Dog)

### Most Creative

Marcia Miller—Piper (Dog)  
Runner up: Allison Cosgrove—Ohana (Dog)

### Most Unusual

Donna O'Brien—Merryweather, Flora, Fawna (Frogs)  
Runner up: Cindy Curtis—Peanut (Squirrel)

### Cutest

Connie Toler-Jason (Dog)  
Runner up: Sherri Davio—Jazzie (Dog)

### Ugliest

Donna O'Brien—Merryweather, Flora, Fawna (Frogs)  
Runner Up: Sarah Norris—Betsy (Dog)

### Prettiest

Carlos Jaramillo—Ziggy (Dog)  
Runner up: Linda McMillan—Lady (Dog)

### Funniest

Robin Bartley—Zorro (Cat)  
Runner up: Sherri Davio—Jazzie (Dog)



Voted "Prettiest" in both Detroit and Lansing was Carlos Jaramillo's dog, Ziggy.



Vialelei, owned by Allison Cosgrove, was voted "Most Adorable" in the Detroit contest.



Donna O'Brien submitted a photo of her frogs, Merryweather, Flora and Fawna, who won for "Ugliest" and "Most Unusual."



# Workers' Comp Seminar Attracts More Than 80

By Norm Isotalo



Workers' Compensation Agency Director Jack Nolish offers overview information about the state's workers' compensation program to seminar attendees in Detroit.

The Workers' Compensation Agency (WCA) held its second annual Trial and Practices Seminar series in early August, and it was a success, attracting more than 80 attendees from around the state.

The free seminar was aimed at attorneys and others interested in learning about Michigan's workers' compensation program. The seminar covered the basics of the program and was divided into two half-day sessions, August 11 and 18.

"This year we featured a mock trial before a workers' compensation magistrate, but in addition we included pre-trial preparations such as interviews with the plaintiff and defendants as well as medical questioning and depositions," WCA Director Jack Nolish explained. Nolish acted as master of ceremonies and commentator for the seminar.

"The trial and the pre-trial work gave those attending the seminar a good idea about all that is entailed in a workers' compensation hearing and the types of evidence and information that are needed to present the best possible case before the magistrate," Nolish said.

The seminar was conducted in Detroit, but was shown live via video-conferencing to sites in Escanaba, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Saginaw.

A number of presenters participated in the seminar series. They included: Phillip Brown, attorney, overview presenter and moderator; Shawn Shearer, attorney, who played the injured worker; Denise L. Clemmons, attorney, plaintiff's counsel; Melvin Houston, attorney, defense counsel; Rita Ingersol, nurse/case manager, employer witness; Dr. James Blessman, occupational medicine, medical evaluator; and Magistrate Victor McCoy.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion involving most of the presenters, plus Martha Glaser, chair, WC Appellate Commission, and Jack Nolish.

The seminar was co-sponsored by the WCA and the Workers' Compensation Section of the State Bar of Michigan. Members of the Committee on Minority Presence and training staff from the Unemployment Insurance Agency also assisted.



In advance of the trial before a WC magistrate, attorney Denise L. Clemmons interviews her "client," played by attorney Sean Schearer, about the nature of his work-related "injury."



Some of those who participated in the workers' compensation seminar series are, front row, l. to r., Denise L. Clemmons and Rita Ingersol, and back row, Phillip Brown, Victor McCoy, Melvin Houston, and Martha Glaser.

## Thanks, DLEG Staff, for Your Generosity

Charities across Michigan are benefiting greatly from DLEG's \$2 jeans day policy. These totals over the past six months reflect the warm generosity of DLEG staff: April, \$885; May, \$1,809.95; June, \$1,477; July, \$1,413; August, \$1,445; and September, \$1,241. Checks have been sent to Mercy Pilots, Eaton Community Hospice, Potter Park Zoo, Midland Cancer Community Services, Capital Area Humane Society, Angel House, Eve's Place, Sparrow Hospital Pediatric Oncology, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Lansing City Rescue Mission, Women Discipleship, Home Volunteers of America, National Kidney Foundation, Salvation Army, Lion's Bear Lake Camp for the Visually Impaired, Haven House, Rave House, Alzheimer's Association, Loaves & Fishes, Ronald McDonald House, and American Cancer Society, among many others.

# We Get Letters ... and E-mails!

Joshua Dawson, manager of Shows & Demonstrations, The New Detroit Science Center, sent this thank you note to **Nirva Civilus**, Office of Media Technology, regarding The Job Show For Teens cable TV show, which featured a segment on the Youth, Engineering & Science (YES) Expo, which was co-sponsored by The New Detroit Science Center: "Kudos on producing a wonderful educational program and many thanks for including us and the YES Expo! We have already received positive feedback from those who have seen it on cable access stations."

Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) Director **Patrick Cannon** received this letter, excerpted below, along with a donation of \$500 to MCB: "This spring I had the privilege of attending the Commission's Training School for the Blind at Kalamazoo for five weeks. I was inspired by the motivation of the student body all searching for ways to cope with the low vision in varying degrees. Through the patience and encouragement of the staff, I returned to Ann Arbor with new confidence in my ability to find a life after blindness ... Prior to leaving the school, I discussed my desire to make a cash donation to the school in appreciation for the opportunity for the training I had received. I hope the enclosed donation can be applied to benefit the school. The Commission is providing exceptional assistance to the blind and handicapped in the state and I thank you for showing me ways to find a life after blindness."

**Lynne Hall**, an occupational therapist at the Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center in Kalamazoo, received this letter from a former student in her World of Work (WOW) class: "WOW does work! I am employed part-time at an Orthopedic office in Muskegon, Michigan. I LOVE it! I am where God wants me to be. I greet the patients, take them to the exam room, do vitals signs (if necessary), remove stitches and staples, saw off casts from arms and legs, fit patients with splints for wrists and legs, help the doctors, clean and restock the rooms. Everyone is very helpful and nice to work with, and most of all we have fun, too! There are two doctors seeing patients the days I work so we are very busy. My friends know me as the energizer bunny so I guess the job fits. So much of my nursing knowledge and abilities are coming back. It feels like I have been reborn ... You all made me confident and strong to face the world no matter how I was seeing it or it was seeing me."

**Roberta McCall**, a blind rehabilitation teacher based at the Michigan Commission for the Blind's Lansing office, received this letter after making a home visit. "Thank you and **Jon [Armstrong]**, your driver] again for making a home visit. I am most appreciative! Facing facts is one thing, learning to cope another. As my A.M.D. [age-related macular degeneration] has progressed, I have regressed: From acceptance, tempered with disbelief, to fear

and confusion. Finding the support group was an important step, but visiting with you taught, reinforced and opened doors. I dare to hope!"

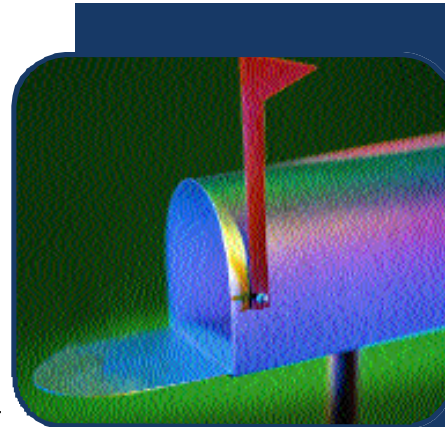
**Marvin Gibbs**, a counselor at the Detroit Schools office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), received this e-mail message from one of his customer's parents: "I want to express my sincere appreciation for the interest that you have shown in our daughter. We both are very grateful to you — and I am especially happy that you noticed she needed glasses! Sometimes it takes a fresh set of eyes to move things along, and your assistance is invaluable."

**Mary Elaine Westberg**, a counselor at the Lansing MRS office, is complimented in this letter from a newly employed customer: "This is the best job I have ever had. I am very happy! My wages are the best in the last 10 years — I've not earned this much ever! Everyone I met [at MRS] was nice and polite. I believe without your services I couldn't have made it, or not that easily or as fast as I did. My thanks for Mary Elaine Westberg, **Bob Smith**, **Nicole [Florence]** and the rest of the staff on the counter. They were extra helpful and bent over backwards for me. Mary Elaine was there to wipe my tears during those cruel years. Thanks to all and Mary Elaine. May God bless you all!"

**Mary Elaine Westberg** also received this note from Ruth Linnemann, Advocacy and Program director, National Multiple Sclerosis Society/Michigan Chapter, following a several-week teleconference, with participants from throughout the state, that focused on employment with MS. The Sept. 19 session featured MRS. "Mary Elaine, Thanks so much for sharing your expertise in the Career Crossroads program. Your awareness of the variability of MS symptoms was a great asset. There should be more people like you!"

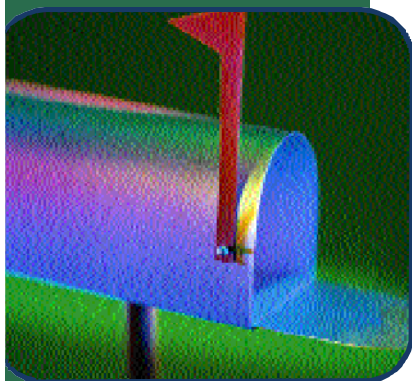
The parents of a customer served by the Clinton Township MRS office sent this glowing letter: "I am impressed with the services our daughter has received from your office—especially from [counselor] **Daphne Young**. Our daughter is extremely proud of herself. She goes to work early. She has a paycheck like other productive adults. She has volunteered to her boss that she'll work for someone else who wants time off. Her self-esteem is at an all-time high. The enclosed letter from her new boss shows the kind of 'work family' she has landed in. The work environment is so important to our kids with disabilities and our daughter has been embraced kindly by everyone at Best Western! This all proves that it does take a village to raise a child, and in this case, each agency and individual who helps her along her path is part of that village. We, as her parents, are so grateful. Thank you for all you have done."

This e-mail message was sent to **Mark Jurewicz**, a counselor at the Clinton Township MRS





# [More] Letters ... and E-mails!



office, from the parents of a customer: "Mark ... Thank you for all your help in getting \_\_\_\_ a job! He seems to really like his new job at Kroger and was so proud when he found out that he was scheduled to work an eight-hour day this next week ('like a real man would'). He is very happy and proud to have a 'real job.' He is sleeping better and is just plain happy, which is so nice to see. Somehow, you always pull it off and help him (which of course means helping his Mom and Dad also). I don't know what we would have done/or would do if it weren't for all the help you have provided him (and his parents) over the last approximately ten years. Again, thanks for all your help!"

A veteran who was receiving services from **Carolynn Blair**, a counselor at the Clinton Township MRS office, sent this e-mail message to Macomb District Manager **Jennie Tunnell**: "Take it from me. I spent 26 years in the Navy. I know what professionalism is. Your staff have it. If anyone ever wants to know, your staff are top notch. You should be proud."

An employer recently wrote to **Sue Easton**, manager, Benefit Systems Control, Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), saying she thinks **Alfretta Head** is super. The employer wrote: "I contacted Alfretta because about 12 of my employees were having problems getting their unemployment checks. She actually spoke with me on the phone, which is amazing. She took all my employees' information. She then returned my calls and fixed all of the problems, save for one. I was able to tell my employees that checks were issued and they could expect their money within the next few days. She has been the most helpful person with unemployment with whom I have worked. It is definitely a good feeling to write a letter telling a supervisor how good their employee is rather than complaining of poor service. If she's like this with her job, she probably operates the same way in her personal life, making her just a super person."

An unemployed worker wrote to **Anna Ramos-Weese** at UIA's Centralized Response Team: "The words you spoke during our conversation — 'I will help you' — were the first positive occurrence in my miserable saga. They were magic to my ears. The first time I was treated as a human being ... those words represented the first glimmer of hope. Now that a resolution has been reached, I find myself searching, not only for the words to thank you for your diligence, patience and kindness, but also for the only whiff of moral support to help me through the ordeal. Mere thank yous don't seem adequate to the task. Would multiplying them a thousand fold do? Please accept them from the bottom of my heart."

Gov. Granholm also sent a letter of thanks to **Anna Ramos-Weese**. The unemployed worker who thanked Anna (see previous letter) also contacted the governor about the good service she received from Anna. The governor wrote: "(The worker) wanted to inform me of

the excellent service you provided. It is apparent from the comments made by (the worker) as well as the exceptional level of service that must be provided in order to inspire someone to take the time to express their gratitude, that you exemplify these qualities (dedication, compassion, self-sacrifice, integrity, excellence, inclusion and teamwork) ... Congratulations on making a difference. ..."

**Connie Luckett**, director of UIA's Quality Assurance program, received a message from an unemployed worker who had kind words for **Juanita Mayes**, who is currently on detail to the Benefit Overpayment Recovery Project. The worker said he wanted to compliment Juanita for being kind to him on the phone. He appreciated her professionalism and was sure this professionalism existed throughout the agency.

Two staff members in UIA's Wage Record Unit were recently complimented by employers for their excellent customer service. **Cecilia Scrivens** received the following note: "With special thanks, true blessings in our lives come from the kindness of others. Thank you, your help is so appreciated and so is your manner of talking. You took all government fear away." Another employer wrote to **Priscilla Johnson**, saying, "Just a note to thank you for all your help with our hourly employees. I know you went out of your way to key in my union group. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated."

**Linda Kalinowski**, UIA Tax Office, passed along an e-mail message from an employer about its website for employers to use when conducting business electronically with the agency. "Just a quick note to say how easy the website is to use now for filing quarterly returns and making tax payments. Great work!"

**Julia Ortega** with UIA's Problem Resolution Office in Grand Rapids recently made a presentation to workers facing layoff with a local employer. After the meeting, the employer wrote to Julia's supervisor to offer her compliments: "She did a wonderful job explaining the services available thru the Michigan Unemployment Agency at our Worker Orientation meetings. Ms. Ortega presented to individuals who were, at best, unhappy about losing their jobs. Ms. Ortega made everyone feel extremely comfortable, and as proof, people asked questions. She provided not only great information, but in a manner that was supportive to individuals who had never used the new unemployment system. Again, Ms. Ortega did an outstanding job and should be commended for her efforts."

An unemployed worker recently wrote to say that state government needs more people like **Debra Singleton**, manager of UIA's Benefit Overpayment Collection Unit: "A few months ago you helped me with an issue where I was being overcharged for taxes on a check that I had returned. I talked to so many people and even sent letters. You were the only one who finally listened to me and helped me solve

# [More] Letters ... and E-mails!

my problem. You told me you saw the problem and 'would take ownership of fixing it.' I recently received my corrected statement, and today, I paid it. Thank you so much for your patience and kindness. I wish more people who work for the state were as willing to help as you. You're a real god-send. Thanks again."

UIA's **Machelle Lorf** is a great customer service employee, according to one employer. Machelle works with the Collection Pilot Project in the agency's Tax Office. The employer wrote: "Recently, our accountant left our company abruptly and left a tangle of paperwork. I had to make numerous calls to various companies to straighten our books. Most were patient and understanding, but I wanted to make a special note to you about Machelle. She was very friendly, articulate and professional and made a tremendous effort to be helpful to our company. Talented customer service employees are very hard to find. I just wanted you to know that you have a great one."

**Cindy Zastrow** with MIOSHA's Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division received the following complimentary remarks from Steve Lyles of Mid-West Truck Accessories in southeastern Michigan regarding a training session she provided: "Regarding the seminar on spray-in bedliner safety information — your presentation was very informative and helpful. Although we do not currently offer spray liners as a service, it was time well spent for me ... Thank you."

Debra A. Chester, an industrial hygienist at Michigan State University, sent an e-mail message to **Chuck Picardy**, health supervisor, MIOSHA's General Industry Safety and Health Division, thanking **Mark Peto** for helping her during a recent MIFACE fatality investigation. She indicated that Mark provided excellent assistance and advice to her, and this enabled her to write a more accurate and detailed report of her MIFACE investigation. She stated that Mark was particularly helpful in describing the operations and locations at the work-site so that her report accurately reflected the conditions at the time of the fatality. She praised Mark for responding to each of her requests promptly, with patience and a great deal of professionalism.

**Patrick Sullivan**, CET construction consultant in MIOSHA, recently received kudos on a visit to Quality 1st Contractors, Inc., in Clarkston. The company stated, "The meeting with Mr. Sullivan was very informative. Not only did he clarify several issues—he provided several information resources. This meeting was beneficial because it helps us prepare a Company Safety & Health Program and addresses fall protection."

**John Peck** with MIOSHA's Construction Safety and Health Division received an e-mail message from Patricia Brogan, a MIFACE investigator, regarding her work with a safety officer on fatality investigations. "I would like to acknowledge the help **Richard Kawucha** gave me in writing the report and his assistance

during the years when I worked on the MIFACE project. He is a consummate safety person and the department is fortunate to have someone with his expertise and knowledge on its staff."

**Mike Pillow**, Licensing Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, received three letters of praise: (1) "Thank you for all your efforts on my behalf. It's people like you that make a difference in our profession." (2) "Thank you for your prompt, courteous, and thorough response to my inquiries as they help to comply fully with all licensing requirements. I am very appreciative and I thank you for your time." (3) "Thank you so much for reviewing my application. I appreciate your efforts and can't thank you enough. I know you are extremely busy and want to express my sincere thanks for taking valuable time to expedite this process."

**Sue Hensley**, Licensing Division, Commercial Services, received this note: "Sue, I got the license for Lakeside on Friday. Thank you so much for your assistance and cooperation in this process. You helped us tremendously and I can tell you take pride in your job. Thanks again."

**Rita Burnett**, Licensing Division, Commercial Services, received two separate e-mail messages: (1) "Rita, thanks for your timely response. I appreciate your time spent on this matter. Your work ethic and customer service is a joy to behold!" (2) "Thank you, Rita, for your kind e-mail and follow up and all of your help. I can't express to you how much I appreciate it. I am in a time crunch and your personal attention has made all of the difference. Thanks again."

**Mary E Littlejohn**, Licensing Division, Commercial Services, received this note: "I recently received my license ... it was a time consuming task ... thank you for your patience and the time you took out of your busy day to answer my various questions."

**Amy Vallier**, Licensing Division, Commercial Services, is complimented in two separate letters: (1) "Amy has shown she can be counted on to keep her word and handle challenging circumstances. I am proud and pleased to be able to say I have come in contact with her and had the opportunity to work with Amy Vallier. She deserves all the accolades she receives. I am truly impressed." (2) "Thank you so much for always returning our calls and all your help. We really appreciate it. I hope you have a wonderful day and again thanks for all your help."

**Linda Pung**, Licensing Division, Commercial Services, received this note: "Linda, I just wanted to drop you a quick note to let you know that you have been a great help to me in filing for this application. You have made the whole process quite easy and efficient. In dealing with government agencies in the past, I have found it to be sometimes a very frustrating experience. With your help, it was been a very pleasurable one. Once again, thank you so very much for your help."

